

Black Caucus, and the Posse Foundation Merit Leadership scholarships to pave the way for his collegiate studies at Vanderbilt University. There he participated in and led several student organizations and honed his theatrical skills, highlighted by directing a student version of Ntozake Shange's play, "for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf" and founding The Black Arts Series at Vanderbilt University.

Tremaine Price is a drama minister and playwright, his original play is titled "For Christian Girls" and it debuted in August 2011. He strives to incorporate performance art into worship, which not only means acting out skits, but also revealing the truths of our triumphs, fears, suffering, and joys through the Christian faith. He is a member of the Young Adult Ministry (Praise Team), the Berean Brotherhood, and the servant leader for the Spiritual Expressions Drama Ministry. He intends on pursuing higher education degrees in Theatre Education and hopes to one day grace the Broadway stage.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Tremaine Antoine Price for his leadership in the religious word and in his community.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent yesterday for votes in the House Chamber. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 379 and 380.

#### A TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW OKEBIYI

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Mr. Matthew Okebiyi. Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Matthew Okebiyi spent most of his youth and formal schooling being shuttled between various parts of Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. It was during those formative years that he witnessed firsthand the effects of poverty, hunger, homelessness, and human rights violations. Those incidents would later have a profound impact upon his life.

Mr. Okebiyi immigrated to the United States in the early 1980s and settled in Brooklyn, New York, where he attended college on a full-time basis while working two jobs. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Communication Arts, pursued advanced studies and earned two Master's degrees: one in Urban Planning and the other in Political Science. He completed his Mental Health training at Hunter College School of Social Work in New York City.

Mr. Okebiyi is the founder of the African American Planning Commission, a New York City-based not-for-profit organization and currently serves as the Executive Director. He also worked to build the Serenity House Family Residence, a 40 unit, \$5.5 million transitional homeless shelter for survivors of domes-

tic violence. The mission of Serenity House is to offer survivors and their minor children, who have exceeded their maximum length of stay in an emergency shelter, a safe but temporary refuge from domestic violence.

Mr. Okebiyi, in addition to his accomplishments, has volunteered with Food Bank and Children's Literacy programs. He maintains a volunteer teaching schedule; tutoring several undergraduate and post-graduate students in his free time, one hundred percent of whom have gone on to receive their Bachelor's and/or Master's degrees.

Mr. Okebiyi has been the recipient of many awards for public service. Most recently was in 2011, when he was the recipient of the prestigious "Man of the Year" award presented by the Brooklyn Branch of Key Women of America, Inc. at its annual gala.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Matthew Okebiyi for his drive to succeed and dedication to social justice. His unceasing commitment to the welfare of others is an inspiration to us all.

#### HONORING ABCD AND ITS FOUNDER, BOB COARD

### HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 19, 2012*

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, June 21, 2012, ABCD will celebrate and honor its late founder, Bob Coard, by renaming its Boston headquarters in honor of this titan in the effort to enable upward mobility and a higher quality of life for all people, regardless of income or situation in life. I rise today to commemorate and congratulate this incredible community action program the nation's leading anti-poverty organization, and to salute my great friend, the late, Bob Coard. From Beacon Hill to Capitol Hill, Bob was a consistent, persistent and insistent force, working tirelessly to direct critical resources toward the fight to eradicate poverty.

Bob was an early, highly-effective general in the War on Poverty. He began his unmatched service even before President Johnson urged communities to organize around the vision of a creating a Great Society free of poverty and abundant in opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, creed or income. And Bob was still on the job when an extraordinary community organizer, President Obama, was sworn in as our 44th president. For all those years, "ABCD" didn't just stand for "Action for Boston Community Development." It also stood for "Anything Bob Coard Desired."

When Bob called, it was because he needed action for Boston's most vulnerable residents—more money for home heating assistance, help with Medicaid funding, support for Head Start.

And we knew Bob was right because Bob recognized that our great challenge here in the United States is to bestow the world's blessings on all of God's children—to ensure, as President Kennedy said in his Inaugural address, that "God's work on earth must truly be our own."

The son of a civil servant from Grenada, Bob Coard immigrated to this country to pursue the American Dream. Once here, he dedicated his own life to helping others pursue that same dream.

When Bob started work at ABCD in 1964, the organization was only two years old and it had a tiny staff. Today, it has 1,000 employees and carries out a wide array of programs focused on meeting the needs of the poor and disadvantaged in the City of Boston.

Recognizing that education provides the best way for young people to, in his words, "make it in this world," Bob started two high schools for at-risk youth at ABCD, in collaboration with the Boston Public Schools.

ABCD has been called the unsung hero of Boston. For 50 years ABCD has saved lives and made dreams come true, and while ABCD is at the heart of Boston's communities, it was the heart of Bob Coard that pushed ABCD to the national model it is today, and John Drew's amazing leadership that keeps that heart beating strong.

From providing heating assistance for those in need during New England's long, cold winters to delivering job training to those who need work, ABCD is the bridge from poverty to self-sufficiency. The opportunities ABCD provides for low-income Boston residents to get back on their feet, live with dignity and achieve their full potential are building blocks for the continued success of these communities.

Today, ABCD's assistance to people and communities has grown to all sectors of poverty relief.

ABCD organizes Head Start programs for over 2,400 low-income children and families every year.

ABCD supplies fuel assistance to more than 22,000 families a year.

ABCD provides services for thousands of at-risk youth through SummerWorks, career development and two alternative high schools, and health services and family planning for more than 30,000 people every year through its Health Services Department.

From the ABCD Foster Grandparents bringing love and security to disadvantaged children, to programs that offer assistance in asset development, tax assistance and financial education, ABCD offers stability, a sense of community and economic security to low-income families.

In President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's second inaugural address, he famously declared that "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

That was Bob Coard's definition of progress, that is John Drew's definition of progress, that is ABCD's mission everyday.

It is with great pride that I congratulate ABCD for its 50 years of vital service to the community, and that I commemorate my friend Bob Coard as ABCD dedicates its Tremont Street headquarters in his honor this Thursday on Boston Common.

It is fitting that Bob Coard's building gazes out on the Common, a lush landscape where Americans from every walk of life enjoy the same open space, on equal footing. And just as the Common is part of the Emerald Necklace of parks and parkways that extend out to Franklin Park in Roxbury, Bob Coard and ABCD stitched together an array of programs that, taken together, provide a safety net for lifting Bay State residents out of poverty and into a new life of self-sufficiency.

Bob Coard and ABCD are American icons, and I congratulate Bob's wife Donna, John